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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2937
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3016
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5282
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2881
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3526
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3600
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

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SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD, IIP, ECA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: EFFECTIVE MEDIA COVERAGE OF
SPECIAL ENVOY FOR EURASIAN ENERGY MORNINGSTAR VISIT

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: The U.S. Secretary of State's Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy Richard L. Morningstar visited Turkmenistan May 29, 2009, holding meetings with President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and high-ranking government officials to discuss energy cooperation with Turkmenistan. The visit received generally accurate and wide media coverage. Morningstar's written answers to international media representatives received accurate coverage and proved to be an effective outreach tool given the packed, one-day schedule. Most media coverage focused on Morningstar's remarks regarding energy diversification and Turkmenistan's potential participation in the Nabucco pipeline project. Some media accurately quoted Morningstar regarding Iran's participation in energy projects and/or carried Post's press release on the visit. END SUMMARY.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHT MORNINGSTAR VISIT TO TURKMENISTAN

¶3. (U) On May 29, the "Watan" evening TV news program (Turkmen) highlighted Morningstar's meeting with President Berdimuhamedov and meetings with government officials. The broadcast praised Morningstar's greetings to the President from President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, emphasizing that the United States attached special importance towards developing a dependable and promising partnership with Turkmenistan. The following day, state-run dailies "Neutral Turkmenistan" (Russian, circ. 47,091) and "Turkmenistan" (Turkmen, circ. 36,091) carried articles similar to the "Watan" broadcast on their front pages. The state website "Turkmenistan Golden Age" (Turkmen, Russian and English) also posted similar articles on the meeting. An April 30 article by news source "ISRIA - FRANCE" (English) reprinted the state website article on the visit.

¶4. (U) Azeri news agency "Trend" (Russian, English) accurately highlighted the visit based on the Embassy

press release on May 30.

MEDIA ACCURATE ON MORNINGSTAR'S REMARKS FOR
DIVERSIFICATION

15. (U) May 29 stories from "Reuters" (English), Russian news agencies "RIA Novosti" (Russian) and "ITAR-TASS" (English, Russian) accurately quoted Morningstar on U.S. support for Turkmenistan's efforts to diversify energy transport routes. Morningstar stated that the United States was supportive of Turkmenistan's participation in projects, including "Nabucco" or any other, that would take Turkmenistan's gas to world markets. He emphasized that the United States would continue to support Turkmenistan's independence and sovereignty through its assistance in development of alternative export routes. Morningstar also noted the United States was encouraged by improved dialog between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, which would help to make further steps for cooperation in energy export. The same day, opposition website "Gundogar" (Russian) reprinted the "ITAR-TASS" story.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHT MORNINGSTAR'S COMMENTS ON IRAN'S
PARTICIPATION IN ENERGY PROJECTS

16. (U) May 29 stories from Russian news agencies "ITAR-TASS" (Russian) and "RIA Novosit" (Russian) accurately quoted Morningstar regarding U.S. policy toward Iran's involvement in energy projects. Morningstar emphasized President Obama's new approach toward Iran, but made it clear it is not yet time to include Iran in any energy

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projects. Morningstar also expressed hope for change in Iran's policy so that it can be welcomed in future energy projects.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: The visit received positive and accurate coverage. Post believes that outreach to international stringers may have averted the tendency of Russian media to misconstrue U.S. involvement in the region or policy towards Iran. Russian media accurately highlighted the visit and accurately quoted Morningstar on U.S. energy policy toward Turkmenistan and current U.S. policy toward Iran. State media praised the visit and Morningstar's warm greetings to President Berdimuhamedov on behalf of President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton. END COMMENT.

MILES